

## THE BALANCE SHEET

In today's competitive business climate, organizations are looking for every advantage. Many are wisely implementing corporate mentoring programs recognizing that the skills and talents of their company's leaders are one of their strongest assets.

### Defining Mentoring

*Mentoring is a brain to pick, an ear to listen, and a push in the right direction – John Crosby*

Mentoring is a developmental partnership where one person shares his or her knowledge, skills, talents and perspectives to help foster the personal and professional growth of another. Everyone can benefit from insights that are outside of our own normal life and educational experience. That's the power of mentoring. It creates a unique opportunity for collaboration, goal achievement and problem solving.

### Mentoring in the Workplace

In the business world, seasoned leaders possess wisdom that only experience can provide. By becoming a mentor to another individual, they can share that insight and provide guidance and support to a protégé following a similar career path.



In their leadership roles, supervisors and managers encounter challenges every day that they must resolve. Having a mentor to turn to and count on gives them the framework and confidence needed to tackle difficult issues. And, a mentor helps them develop strategies to prevent similar problems from recurring in the future.

### Benefits of Mentoring

Mentoring benefits everyone — the mentor, the protégé, and the organization as a whole. It allows the mentor the opportunity to strengthen his or her leadership skills. And it gives that individual the sense of well-being and accomplishment that comes with helping another.

The supervisor or manager being mentored reaps a wealth of benefits including the opportunity to:

- Define goals and find ways to achieve them
- Acquire new intervention skills
- Receive case management support
- Explore coaching boundaries
- Increase understanding of professional issues
- Develop a professional code of conduct
- Increase innovation and exposure to cutting-edge tools
- Enhance awareness of the latest effective evidence-based practices
- Improve ability to apply appropriate methodology
- Foster confidence
- Improve accountability
- Gain access to additional resources
- Receive introductions to a network of influential people

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## Types of Mentoring Relationships

Mentoring relationships may be informal or formal. When informal, they are typically a casual relationship where a senior person takes a junior person “under his or her wing” for guidance and counsel. Professional organizations also facilitate mentoring activities among their members through informal networking and skill development opportunities.

Recognizing the many benefits mentors offer, many savvy organizations have initiated “formal” mentoring programs. For example, some companies have implemented mentoring programs that match new hires with people already established in their jobs. Other organizations contract with an external facilitator to design and deliver an internal mentoring program, or to enroll members of their management team in a cross-company mentoring program.

**DID YOU KNOW?** The original Mentor is a character in Homer’s epic poem *The Odyssey*. When Odysseus, King of Ithaca, went to fight in the Trojan War, he entrusted the care of his kingdom to Mentor. Mentor served as the teacher and overseer of Odysseus’ son, Telemachus.

## Finding A Mentor

As a supervisor or manager, having a mentor will benefit you and your career. If a mentor program isn’t offered by your employer, and you don’t belong to a professional organization, you can still choose to find a mentor on your own. Look for an individual whose goals are similar to yours, who is further along the career path than you are, and who has enough time to dedicate to the relationship.

The best place to look is typically right in front of you, in your own workplace or industry. Is there an individual you admire and respect? Someone who has always impressed you with his or her insight and ability?



Approach that person and ask if he or she would consider being your mentor. Don’t put it off. What can you lose? Even if he or she declines to be your mentor — and very few people do — that individual will be flattered that you asked and think highly of you going forward.

Before taking such action, make sure that you are fully committed to learning as much as you can from your mentor and are ready to be responsive to his or her needs.

## Being A Mentor

What does it take to be a business mentor? It requires a strong level of commitment and confidence in your own abilities along with a willingness to share your time and talent to help another person advance and grow.

## Symmetry Can Help

Symmetry understands the benefits of developing extraordinary leaders and the many ways that an organization can facilitate the mentoring process. For more information about locating a mentor or becoming a mentor, or for assistance developing a corporate mentoring program, please call Symmetry at **(800) 236-7905** or **(414) 256-4800**.



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